

## March 2025 WEBB Zoom Meeting: Tentative Agenda for Draft Minutes

### Attendees:

Juliet Lamont, Phil Price, Claire Oxford, Pam MacBrayne, Jeff Crawford, Jean Lamont, Margot Woodworth, Nan Lee, Kate Hotchkiss, Marcia Neal, Donald Moffett, Leslie Hyman, Mary White, Beth Lamont, Monique Pettit

### Agenda

#### 1. Introductions

Juliet gave a few introductory remarks.

#### 2. Overview of Meeting Topical Focus (Juliet)

Water, and specifically the Saltwater Intrusion Study findings (Ransom Engineering report, 2024). Water is a critical component of sustainability, and a pressing challenge for an island community like North Haven, where both climate-induced changes and the daily behavior and needs of our community are altering our freshwater supply as well as creating challenges for wastewater treatment, with repercussions across the entire ecological system. Town is addressing these challenges through a series of studies and recommended actions (past, current, and anticipated).

#### 3. Summary of Saltwater Intrusion study findings, presented by Claire Oxford (Island Institute fellow working with the Town of North Haven).

Ransom Engineering just completed a vulnerability assessment of flooding and saltwater intrusion in North Haven's Fresh Pond, the island's main source of drinking water. A [quick PDF/slide deck summary of key findings](#) is available at the Town website.

The results are “alarming,” and the Town is now applying for sustainable adaptation grant funding, to try and address this anticipated challenge, with community input and review anticipated. The full report is available at, [Coastal Flooding & Drinking Water Vulnerability and Resiliency Planning, North Haven, ME](#), and also attached here as a PDF file.

For some post-meeting reading about this study and Town action around water, please visit the in-depth, robust [Town of North Haven Freshwater Resources website page](#), which summarizes past studies, as well as key issues being addressed and on deck for the future.

1. Oxford's presentation covered the following:
  1. A recorded presentation by Ransom Consulting on the North Haven Maine YouTube channel. (North Haven has a YouTube channel?)
  2. 2022 – Fresh water resources were identified as a core priority in the Community Vision process. A 2023 hydrogeologic report was performed. 2022-2024 Ransom Consulting did a saltwater intrusion risk assessment (funded by a Coastal Community grant) that revealed significant risk of salt water intrusion into Fresh

Pond, the town's only freshwater source. This is what Oxford is presenting today. The town has applied for another grant to come up with a mitigation design.

3. Ransom reported "almost a 100% chance of a flood with an elevation exceeding 8 feet (allowing salt water into Fresh Pond) in the next 20 years. At a minimum they recommend modifying the culvert under Middle Road to reduce the risk of saltwater flooding into Fresh Pond from "Salt Pond" (the site of the oyster farm).
4. Potential saltwater intrusion through the culvert under middle road (high point at 8.5 ft elevation above NAVD88 elevation) and over Middle Road (13.5 ft). Saltwater intrusion likely when water elevations reach approx.. 9 ft. Floods exceeding 10ft are likely to lead to Fresh Pond becoming too salty to meet WHO and EPA drinking water levels.
5. Ransom (consultants) says to expect approx. 1.6 ft of sea level rise in the next 50 years and 3+ feet in the next 100 feet, which makes flooding at problematic levels almost guaranteed within 50 years. Approx 50% chance of a 10-foot flood or more in the next 20 years.
6. Recommended next steps (from Ransom): Install backflow prevention on the Middle Road culvert and raise the road elevation to 15 feet. Also: conduct an in-depth analysis of alternative approaches, including evaluating costs; determine state and federal funds available for final design and/or construction.
7. Pending community action grant (application completed December 2024)...should hear back by beginning of April. Applied for \$75K through Community Resilience Partnership. Grant would include: hire engineering firm for doing environmental analysis of options and come up with shovel-ready proposal. Pursue implementation funding.

#### **4. Q&A around Study Findings**

Jean Lamont asks whether preventing intrusion into Fresh Pond would also protect island wells from saltwater intrusion. Oxford says she isn't sure. Juliet Lamont says the wells are fed by surface water percolating through to the aquifer, which is not a big underground cavity but rather just pore spaces between gravel and soil particles underground.

Donald Moffett asks how much salt water intrusion is currently taking place in Salt Pond and how is it happening? Oxford says it's her understanding that it comes in through the vulnerable culvert in high storm surges. Lamont confirms. Moffett also asks whether Salt Pond has any fresh water source other than Fresh Pond. Phil Price notes that the ground slopes down towards salt pond, especially from north and west, so when it rains there is some fresh water runoff; also that there might be an input from the same freshwater source that feeds the nearby artesian well on Middle Road, doesn't know. Oxford says she will see what she can find from public sources.

Jeff Crawford notes that there is a Fresh Pond protection district that is managed by the town, that has strict rules on development and pollution sources that would feed into Fresh Pond.

Margot Woodworth says she thinks she recalls that there are already contaminated with salt. Is that the case? Also, if that happens, does that well user have an alternative or are they just out of luck? Oxford checked a map (available on the Town website) that shows several wells that have reported saltwater intrusion.

Nan Lee says her summertime neighbors, who have a well lower and closer to the well than hers (near Southern Harbor), have had brackish water in their well for years.

## **5. Upcoming Events**

Pam MacBrayne mentions several North Haven Conservation Partners events of interest to WEBB:

June 7 Burnt Island tour

June ? Sage Woods tour with introduction to a barn/sled location.

Traditional Crabtree

July 25 Greg Marley mushroom presentation in partnership with Waterman's; and workshop on the 26<sup>th</sup> (also

August 5 Speaker to be announced

Kayak to Perry's Creek

Hike to Fox Rocks

"sometime in mid-August" - Peleg Thomas Trail picnic lunch and jazz concert with Jump-off-the-bridge Quartet

Jean L notes that Astronomy On The Golf Course is scheduled for July 23

Donald M asks if there is a central calendar, noting that he and others often miss things: there are events from the library and NHCP and Waterman's and WEBB etc. etc. Juliet L says the Town of North Haven community calendar can serve that role, all it takes is for organizations to get used to posting all of their events there and for people to get used to checking it.

Nan Lee asks if there would be enthusiasm for the Dark Skies film or for bringing the director out to talk about it etc. (He also has a new movie he's working on). Donald M expresses enthusiasm. Juliet L offers WEBB help.

## **5. Quick Summary of Interconnected Water Challenges on North Haven**, presented by Juliet Lamont (WEBB Member)

The saltwater intrusion issue is part of the interconnected "water web" on-island, which includes both surface water - Fresh Pond, the island's surface creeks, tributaries, ponds, and wetlands (year-round and seasonal) - as well as our groundwater "aquifers" -

the underground storage and source of water that replenishes the island's surface water systems.

In addition, there are key interconnections across our water supply with wastewater and sewage treatment, and waste generation overall. This includes the looming issue of our primary sewage treatment facility's vulnerability to climate-induced sea level rise and storm surge, due to its location adjacent to the Thorofare.

While we can't cover every one of these issues in one meeting, we are hoping to present several of these key water issues in future meetings, or possibly at in-person speaker events or workshops on-island.

By anticipating and acting now, with holistic approaches and solutions, we may have a chance to adapt and change before the impacts and outcomes are insurmountable.

## **6. Discussion of Ideas, Events, & Timing for Spring/Summer 2025**

- Potential speaker events, and/or movies/discussions (e.g. Dark Skies, The Long Coast - Ian Cheney); Avena Hummingbird Hubs project - Becky Bartovics will tell us more in May); others?
- Garden work parties - one in July, one August...volunteers to organize?
- Annual potluck
- Educational workshops
- Partner events we can help sponsor, highlight, etc.?

## **7. NH News Articles**

**NH News articles and authors for May, June, July, Aug (not all months, but some...)** We've had an incredible set across the last three months - from buckthorn challenges, to bees and meadows and regenerative soil practices, and most recently, "dark skies" (and stars!). **And WEBB NH News articles are now all posted and available digitally at our WEBB website ([nhwebb.org/news/](http://nhwebb.org/news/)) along with past articles by WEBB members.** So if you missed the paper copies, we've got you covered!

But we need more ahead. All authors welcome! We look for interest and passion in our articles and authors, not perfection (plus we have great editors if you want some help). Your own voices and words are what matter.